

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION
BETWEEN: -

Claim No: HC11C01154

CHRIS BRYANT MP

Claimant

- and -

(1) NEWSGROUP NEWSPAPERS LIMITED
(2) GLENN MULCAIRE

Defendants

STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

Counsel/Solicitor for the Claimant

1. In this action for misuse of private information, breach of confidence and harassment, I appear for the Claimant. My learned friend, Michael Silverleaf QC, appears for the First Defendant.
2. The Claimant is the Member of Parliament for the Rhondda. The First Defendant was the publisher of *The News of the World* newspaper which, until its notorious closure in July 2011, was the UK's biggest selling Sunday newspaper with a very considerable readership in this jurisdiction. It was also published in an online version, www.newsoftheworld.com. As is now common knowledge due to the huge publicity that this matter has attracted, the Second Defendant, Mr Glenn Mulcaire, was a private investigator engaged by the First

Defendant to carry out various investigative activities. His methods included the unlawful interception of mobile telephone voicemail messages and obtaining information from mobile phone companies and others by deception, an activity commonly known as 'blagging'.

3. In 2003 the Claimant found himself the subject of highly intrusive articles published in *The News of the World* which contained private information. At the time, the Claimant had no idea who or what the source of this information could be and could not understand how this private information was ending up in the hands of journalists.
4. Over the same period, the Claimant had considerable concerns about the security of his mobile telephone, having experienced episodes when the "voicemail pending" icon disappeared before he had listened to the voicemails in question.
5. In July 2009, after *The Guardian* published an article indicating that voicemail interception had been widespread at *The News of the World*, the Claimant asked the Metropolitan Police Service whether they had any evidence that he had been targeted by the First and Second Defendant in 2005-2006. After some delay, the Police informed the Claimant that they did indeed have evidence to suggest that he had been a target and showed it to him. It was a matter of the utmost distress to the Claimant to discover that his privacy had been unlawfully invaded in this way.
6. In April 2011 the Claimant duly issued legal proceedings against the First and Second Defendants for misuse of private information, breach of confidence and harassment. The First Defendant indicated its intention to defend his claim; in July 2011 it served a Defence in which it admitted to voicemail interception but denied that any of the information obtained by the Second Defendant about the Claimant was

private. However, much to the Claimant's dismay, the First Defendant changed its position a few months later and amended its Defence stating that it denied voicemail interception. In addition to his distress at the actual wrongs committed, this change of stance caused further distress to the Claimant.

7. However, on 13 December 2011 the First Defendant admitted a list of matters including that it had entered into an agreement with the Second Defendant and paid him hundreds of thousands of pounds to obtain information about specific individuals for use by *The News of the World* journalists and publication in the newspaper. It admitted that certain of its employees were aware of, sanctioned and requested the methods used by the Second Defendant which included the unlawful interception of mobile phone voicemail messages and obtaining call and text data, (which methods are now known as "phone hacking"); obtaining information by "blagging"; and, in one case, unlawfully accessing emails. It also admitted that the Second Defendant had provided journalists at *The News of the World* with information to enable the said journalists themselves to intercept voicemail messages. The First Defendant accepted that some information unlawfully obtained by the Second Defendant was used to enable private investigators employed by *The News of the World*, including Derek Webb, to monitor, locate and track individuals and place them under surveillance.

8. I am here today to publicly announce that the First Defendant has accepted liability for breach of confidence and invasion of privacy in this matter and has agreed to pay damages, including aggravated damages, to the Claimant in the sum of £30,000 together with his legal costs. The First Defendant has also agreed to continue to carry out searches of documents in its possession and to disclose the results to the Claimant so that he can ascertain the extent of the wrongdoing.

9. Both Defendants have also undertaken not to further access the Claimant's voicemail messages or to publish unlawfully obtained private information about the Claimant.

Counsel for the First Defendant

10. My Lord, on behalf of the First Defendant I confirm everything that [my learned Friend], Mr Tomlinson QC/Ms Allen, has said.

11. The First Defendant is here today, through me, to offer its sincere apologies to the Claimant for the damage, as well as the distress, caused to him by unlawfully accessing his voicemail messages and obtaining confidential information. The First Defendant acknowledges that this information should never have been obtained in the manner that it was, that it had no right to intrude into his privacy this way and that the First Defendant is liable for misuse of private information and breach of confidence.

Counsel/Solicitor for the Claimant

12. My Lord I ask for leave to withdraw the record.

Tamsin Allen

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Hugh Tomlinson QC/ Tamsin Allen for the Claimant

Michael Silverleaf

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Michael Silverleaf QC for the First Defendant